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REPORT

OF THE

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

JANUARY 13-21, 1986

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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

JULY 1986

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FOREWORD

Between January 13 and January 22, 1986, a bi-partisan delegation of the Senate and House of Representatives traveled to Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos in an effort to improve the Congress' knowledge of the status of America's missing-in-action servicemen still unaccounted for more than 15 years after the Vietnam war.

This report attempts to detail the delegation's journey and offers our perspective into the very complex issue surrounding America's missing in action. As will be reiterated in the report's comments, the delegation did not set out with the hopes of reaching any conclusions—we simply wished to obtain a clearer picture of the history of MIA accountability and the troublesome allegations that American servicemen may still be alive, and in captivity, in Southeast Asia.

I believe this publication does reflect our journey accurately and with the objectivity so vital to any discussion of America's MIA's. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the members of the delegation, Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona), Representative Bob McEwen (R-Ohio), and Representative Michael Bilirakis (R-Florida) for their enormous contribution to our delegation's successful mission. Also, I wish to acknowledge the fine efforts of the staff of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the planning and preparation for the delegation's trip and its report.

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
United States Senate.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	III
Introduction	1
Historical Perspective, POW/MIA Issue	2
Goals of Delegation's Trip	5
Delegation's Itinerary	6
Hawaii	6
Joint Casualty Resolution Center	6
Central Identification Laboratory	7
Philippines	9
Thailand	9
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	11
Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic	22
Thailand	24
Comment	27
Acknowledgments	29
Chronology of U.S./SRV POW/MIA Activities	30

INTRODUCTION

On January 13, 1986, Members of the Senate and House of Representatives Veterans' Affairs Committees began an 8-day tour to Southeast Asia to examine more closely the issue of American servicemen missing in action [MIA] from the Vietnam conflict. The delegation consisted of Senator Frank H. Murkowski (R-Alaska), chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee; Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona); Representative Robert McEwen (R-Ohio); and Representative Michael Bilirakis (R-Florida). The delegation visited Hawaii, the Philippines, Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam [SRV], and Lao People's Democratic Republic [LPDR].

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, POW/MIA ISSUE

American efforts to locate all missing-in-action service personnel from the Vietnam-era theater of operations have, in historical perspective, been more successful than efforts from earlier conflicts; as of January 1986, 2,441 servicemen remain missing in action—just over 4 percent of all casualties; more than 80,000 remain MIA from World War II—equivalent to 20 percent of the casualties; and approximately 8,000 are still missing from the Korean conflict—just under 20 percent of all U.S. casualties from that period.

Since the cessation of hostilities, the recovery of remains—or opportunities to recover remains—have been severely hindered in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia due to restricted access to the battlefields; yet the recovery of remains from this era exceeds recoveries from other combat theaters. Certainly, the intense use of helicopters—a developing tool during the Korean conflict—during, and immediately after battles—and the significant lack of open ocean warfare—which contributed to many MIA's during the Second World War—improved opportunities for body recovery during the Vietnam war.

With the end of combat operations in Southeast Asia in 1973, U.S. attempts to recover MIA's depended on cooperation between the American Government and the Governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Between 1973 and 1975, the Vietnamese released 659 American prisoners, and in the period between 1975 and November 1985, returned 123 remains of American MIA's. Of the 2,441 MIA's listed in Southeast Asia, 1,603 are assumed to be in Vietnam. The Lao Government returned four remains in August of 1978, and allowed a U.S. technical team to excavate the crash of an AC–130 gunship near Pakse, Laos, in February 1985, from which 13 remains were taken and subsequently identified. Pending the results of another AC–130 crash-site recovery operation scheduled for late winter of 1986, 556 Americans remain missing within Lao borders. Due to adverse political and military conditions in Cambodia (Kampuchea), the 82 known MIA cases in that country remain unresolved and not negotiable through diplomatic channels.

An atmosphere conducive to MIA discussions with the Vietnamese and Lao did not readily exist until May of 1981, when technical meetings between the United States and Vietnam began the most productive chronology. In July of that year, the remains of three servicemen were turned over to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center [JCRC] which is the primary Department of Defense [DOD] organization responsible for remains disposition. Prior to that date, there had been a sporadic return rate from the SRV, accounting

for 72 sets of remains—some turned over to the JCRC, others presented to visiting administration or congressional delegations.

Vietnam has, during the past 4 years, steadily increased the level of its cooperation in resolving the POW/MIA issue. The first high-level U.S./SRV MIA talks took place in February 1982, with the United States being represented by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage. In September 1982, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach announced the SRV's agreement to a U.S. request for regular meetings in Hanoi at the rate of four a year. The following month the Vietnamese returned four remains and additional information about three more MIA's. During 1985, Vietnam agreed to increase technical meetings to at least six a year, repatriating more remains than during any year since 1973, and carried out the first United States-Vietnamese joint excavation of a crash-site. In July 1985, the Indonesian Foreign Minister announced Vietnam's intention to resolve the MIA issue "within 2 years." For further details of the 1981–86 chronology, refer to page 30, of this report.

By 1985, with the establishment of a generally regular and progressive succession of talks and an increasingly regular return of remains, U.S. attention began to focus on the issue of "live sightings" and "discrepancy" cases. Live sightings encompass all reports alleging U.S. servicemen as alive in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia under conditions which vary from unrestricted to captive within restrictive compounds. Discrepancy cases can be broadly defined as unresolved cases of captured or downed Americans known to be alive prior to the end of Southeast Asian hostilities but who were not part of repatriation activities at the end of the war and whose postcombat disposition has not been satisfactorily addressed by officials of Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia. Between 1975 and 1985 the Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA] processed 805 alleged firsthand live-sighting reports. Of these reports, 506 (85 percent) were eventually associated with individuals living or since deceased outside Southeast Asia, 180 reports were judged to be fabrications, and 119 cases remain unresolved. Of the 119 unresolved cases, 56 sightings referred to some form of imprisonment, while 63 implied a non-prison environment.

Between 1975 and 1980, 37 prison-environment sightings were reported, with only three sightings reported between 1980 and 1986 (one in 1981 and two in 1984), with 17 sightings reported prior to 1975. Of all 56 "captive environment" reports addressed by the DIA, 18 are considered "too vague" to yield substantial leads and three come from sources no longer available to the DIA. The remaining 35 "active" cases are being pursued by DIA investigators, and are the basis for the administration's operative statement on the issue of live sightings:

> Although we have thus far been unable to prove that Americans are still detained against their will, the information available to us precludes ruling out that possibility. Actions to investigate live-sighting reports receive, and will continue to receive necessary priority and resources

based on the assumption that at least some Americans are still being held captive.

By the midsummer of 1985, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee was receiving a steady flow of requests, information, and reports regarding Americans missing in action or alleged to still be held captive in Southeast Asia. In response to the increasing interest from many segments of the community—the public, news media, government officials—a representative of the chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs met with Vietnamese officials in New York and Lao Government officials in Washington, DC, to arrange a Senate delegation visit to Vietnam and Laos to discuss POW/MIA and related issues.

GOALS OF DELEGATION'S TRIP

1. Ascertain the facts surrounding the fate of the 2,441 servicemen unaccounted for in Southeast Asia.
2. Demonstrate to the Vietnamese and Lao leadership the unified U.S. Government position on the POW/MIA issue and the importance the Congress places on the timely resolution of this matter.
3. Stress to the Vietnamese and Pathet Lao the importance of joint crash-site excavation efforts and live-sighting investigations.
4. Express appreciation with the steps taken to speed resolution of this humanitarian issue.
5. Indicate that the level of activity must be accelerated if the POW/MIA issue is to be resolved within 2 years.
6. Emphasize that the United States will not discuss economic and/or political normalization with Vietnam in the absence of significant progress toward resolving the POW/MIA issue and until there is a political settlement in Cambodia acceptable to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] and involving Vietnamese withdrawal.
7. Express U.S. regret that Vietnam has not been willing to release Reeducation Camp inmates for resettlement in the United States.
8. Discuss matters related to the Orderly Departure Program and Amerasian children.

The trip was planned to incorporate a series of enroute briefings from Department of Defense and State Department personnel at the Joint Casualty Resolution Center and Central Identification Laboratory [CIL] in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

DELEGATION'S ITINERARY

HAWAII

Upon arrival in Honolulu, the delegation was briefed by Adm. Ronald J. Hays, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command [CINCPAC], U.S. Navy. The CINCPAC briefing provided the delegation with an intelligence update and an overview of United States and Soviet military operations in the Pacific and Indian Ocean.

JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER

Created in 1973 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], the Joint Casualty Resolution Center is the primary facility for receiving and repatriating the remains of U.S. military personnel. The JCRC is presently manned by 16 military personnel and 4 civilians. Included in this staffing is a five-man liaison office in the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. Recently, the JCS authorized four additional personnel for JCRC headquarters, and two personnel for the liaison office to augment the refugee interviewing process, bringing the total JCRC staffing authorization to 20 personnel.

The majority of the JCRC's activity is devoted to interviewing refugees, analytical investigation, and records updating. This function was of principle interest to the delegation, specifically the JCRC's data collection, analysis, and subsequent inter- and intra-service data distribution and correlation of MIA live-sighting reports. The delegation expressed concern that data developed by one group within the Department of Defense's intelligence network might not be transmitted in toto throughout the network, resulting in incomplete data evaluation by one or more subsequent groups receiving the data. In addition, the delegation noted that, although the JCRC maintains MIA case histories in a computer, this data base is not shared by other DOD data systems.

During JCRC briefings, members of the delegation were provided with details about the JCRC's crash-site excavation activities in Laos and Vietnam, with descriptions of planning, methodology, government-to-government protocols, and future activities. Concurrent with the delegation's tour of the JCRC, results of the November 1985, B–52 crash-site excavation near Hanoi were being analyzed and plans for a second crash-site excavation were being developed.

1. Enroute to Southeast Asia, members of the Delegation receive a briefing from LTC Joe Harvey, U.S. Army, on the mission of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC)

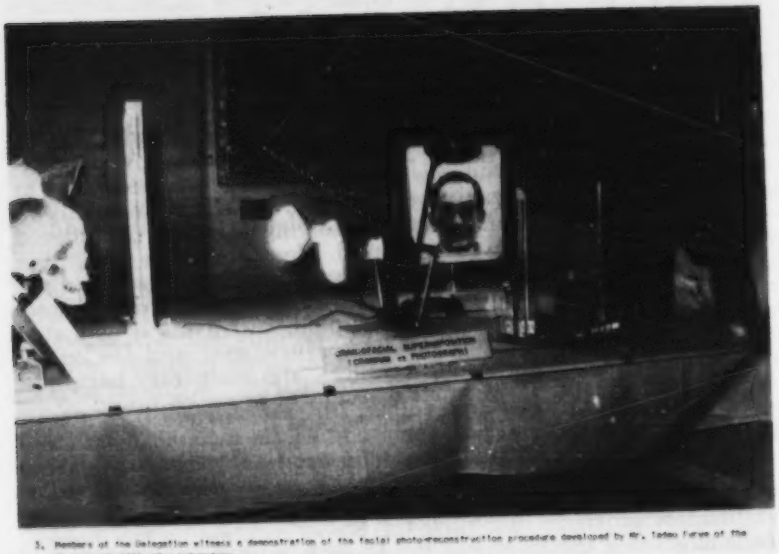
CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY

The primary function of the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory is to conduct search and recovery operations in Southeast Asia in support of the JCRC. Recovered or returned remains are delivered to the CIL. There, JCRC analysts compare information provided by the returning country with data in their files to prepare a list of candidate identifications. Laboratory professionals then compare recorded physiological characteristics (dental charts, x ray, etc.) of the candidates with the actual remains to arrive at a tentative identification. This tentative identification is reviewed by the Armed Services Graves Registration Office in Washington, DC, prior to being submitted to the appropriate military service for final approval.

2. LTC John Mann, U.S. Army, shows members of the delegation a few of the personal effects recently returned by Vietnam and undergoing analysis at the Central Identification Laboratory, Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

In addition, the CIL is responsible for continuing search and recovery operations in the Pacific area for WWII and Korean war dead, as well as the performance of other humanitarian missions as directed by the Department of Defense. In the performance of these missions, CIL staff accumulate and catalogue information on American and allied personnel listed as missing and those declared dead but body not recovered [BNR]. They search relevant crash sites and grave sites and recover remains. CIL staff applies anthropological and other sophisticated scientific techniques in the processing of remains to establish positive identification and subsequently prepares remains for shipment to final destinations.

Members of the delegation had an opportunity to tour the CIL facilities at a time when several sets of remains were being analyzed. The delegation was briefed on various identification techniques, including a unique facial photo-reconstruction procedure developed by Mr. Tadao Furue, senior forensic anthropologist of the CIL.



5. Members of the Delegation witness a demonstration of the facial photoreconstruction procedure developed by Mr. Tadeu Furse of the Central Identification Laboratory.

PHILIPPINES

From Honolulu, the delegation traveled to Clark Air Base in the Philippines where delegation members were briefed by the American Ambassador, Stephen Bosworth; Maj. Gen. Gordon E. Williams, Commander, 13th Air Force; and Rear Adm. Edwin R. Kohn, Jr., Commander, U.S. Navy, Philippines. The delegation received an extensive overview of military and political affairs in the Philippines as well as an update on political activities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] and military and political activities of the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China [PRC] with respect to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

On the morning of the delegation's departure from the Philippines to Bangkok, the delegation was given an aerial tour of the Clark Air Base and Subic Bay region. The U.S. military presence in the Philippines continues to be a vital link in the strategic security of U.S. allies in the Pacific, Asian, and Indian Ocean regions.

THAILAND

Arriving in Bangkok, the delegation was briefed by the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, William A. Brown, and members of his staff on the most recent events and political situation in Vietnam and Laos with special emphasis on the meetings the week before between U.S. State and Defense Department officials and representatives of the SRV. Ambassador Brown's assessment of Vietnam's political relationships with the PRC, the Soviet Union, and Laos was candid and insightful. The Ambassador impressed on the delega-

tion the effect of the PRC's military activities along Vietnam's northern border and along the northern frontier of Laos.

In a meeting with the delegation, Thai Foreign Minister Sitthi Sawetsila said Thailand "treasured" the U.S. policy of not linking the POW/MIA problem with normalization of relations with Vietnam. Sitthi said a U.S. technical presence in Vietnam would not be necessary unless Vietnam speeded up the search and investigation of "live sightings." If Vietnam did speed things up, according to Sitthi, Hanoi might ask for U.S. technical assistance, not only in the search for Americans, but in resolving some of the alleged 300,000 Vietnamese MIA cases as well. Members of the delegation noted that cooperation in this would seem to be a reasonable humanitarian response. Sitthi responded that Vietnam would distort and exploit any U.S. presence in Vietnam, portraying it as a step toward normalization. After Senators Murkowski and DeConcini emphasized the humanitarian, technical, and temporary nature of any presence, Sitthi agreed that a technical presence would be all right as long as the time period was set and the Vietnamese publicly acknowledged this.

Sitthi gave the delegation an optimistic briefing on the situation in Cambodia and the prospects for the resistance. He emphasized Vietnamese problems in sealing the border, containing the guerrillas, and gaining the loyalty of the Heng Samrin troops. Sitthi said that the Soviet Union was a key to the Cambodian problem since Vietnam could not carry on in Cambodia without Soviet aid—$1 billion in economic assistance and $800 million in military assistance per year. Sitthi said Thailand had made it clear to the Soviets that unless the Soviets stopped supporting the Vietnamese occupation they could not expect Thai friendship. Responding to a question on the significance of the military activity on the Sino-Vietnamese border, Sitthi said that the Chinese were keeping up the pressure along the border. Sitthi noted that the Chinese had conducted attacks in the Malipo area and were, at times, 30 kilometers into Vietnamese territory, which was apparently a reference to shelling rather than ground forces.

Sitthi commented that in case of a large scale Vietnamese incursion into Thailand, Thailand would ask China to do more. Chinese action and other pressures on Vietnam were taking a toll, according to Sitthi. Sitthi said that he did not believe that there would be major Vietnamese attacks on the Thai border this dry season since this would be counter to Soviet objectives and cause problems for Vietnam, but he added Thailand must be prepared. In this context he cited the logistics memorandum of understanding signed last year with the United States as a help in obtaining supplies promptly if necessary.

The Foreign Minister briefly commented on Laos. He said that Thailand treated the Lao as their "younger brothers," but that Vientiane was firmly under Vietnamese control. With reference to the frictions of the past 2 years, Sitthi said that if the Lao calmed down, Thailand would send senior officials to Vientiane to talk to their Lao counterparts.

Sitthi raised the serious problem for Thai rice farmers caused by the U.S. farm bill. He mentioned that he had appealed to Senators Hatch and Hecht on this and asked that the Murkowski delegation look into the situation as well. In particular, he said that Thailand did not subsidize its rice exports, but, in fact, charged a premium on rice exports. Thailand could not compete with a big country like the United States if America decided to use its resources to subsidize exports. Sitthi said that other U.S. visitors had told him that they had been unaware of the damage the farm bill would do to Thailand, but nevertheless rice support provisions had been "slipped in."

The members of the delegation thanked Sitthi for Thailand's efforts against the drug trade and the Thai's willingness to accept a number of U.S. law enforcement officials on Thai soil. Sitthi promised that Thailand would do more. He mentioned that he would be going to Burma in February and would try to work for better cooperation with the Burmese. According to Sitthi, the Thai and Burmese Armies should act as "hammer and anvil to crush the drug traders." However, bilateral relations with Burma were not yet at the stage where this type of coordination was possible.

The delegation also thanked Thailand for its humanitarian efforts in handling the Indochinese refugee problem. Sitthi said that Thailand and the United States agreed on refugee policy. Thailand expected the Khmer evacuees to eventually return to Cambodia and did not expect them to be resettled in third world countries, except for a few cases. However, Lao and Vietnamese refugees kept coming, and the refugee population in Thailand was almost static. Sitthi acknowledged the great U.S. contribution in taking most of those already resettled from Thailand. He suggested that future efforts be concentrated on getting other countries to take more, to share the burden more fairly.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The delegation arrived at Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport on a mild, overcast morning, January 17, after a brief flight from Bangkok. The Vietnamese drove the delegation into Hanoi in a small caravan, giving the members and staff of the delegation an opportunity to see the Vietnamese countryside, "suburban villages" and downtown Hanoi on the 45-minute trip. The consensus among the delegation was that this particular region of Vietnam was experiencing severe social and economic depression. There were few, if any, signs of economic recovery from the war; this was notably reflected in the lack of physical reconstruction of village and urban structures. The Vietnamese people, however, were very warm and cordial, and seemed genuinely interested in working with the visiting Americans. Although the Soviet Union has established a presence in Vietnam, that presence was not immediately apparent during the delegation's visit.

62-107 O—86——2

4. Mr. Nguyen Can, Acting Director of North American Affairs, greets members of the Delegation at Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport.

5. Street scene of downtown Hanoi. Dependance on bicycles is very evident.

6. Typical scene of structures, roads and mode of transportation throughout Vietnam. The Delegation noted the severe depression and total lack of economic recovery in the aftermath of the war.

The delegation first met with Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister Hoan Bich Son at the State guest house. Son was accompanied by Nguyen Can, Acting Director of North American Affairs, and Vu Thi Hu and Ngo Hoang of the North American Directorate and Le Tran Tien of the Press Directorate. Senator Murkowski began the discussions by emphasizing that the delegation came as the elected representatives of the American people, and that, while the U.S. administration had already formed an ongoing dialog with the SRV, the U.S. Congress represented a broader, citizens' interest in addressing the issues of Americans remaining in Vietnam.

7. Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister Hoan Bich Son greets members of the Delegation to the Foreign Ministry for consultations on the POW/MIA issue.

Members of the delegation also underlined the fact that the American people and the administration give the highest priority to resolution of the MIA issue. The delegation noted that the American people were concerned by allegations of Americans remaining in Southeast Asia via reports of live sightings and that the United States and Vietnam should consider jointly following up such reports. In response to Vietnamese assertions that they have approximately 300,000 of their own soldiers missing in action after the war, the delegation suggested that American technical expertise might assist Vietnam in recovering and/or accounting for its own missing.

Deputy Foreign Minister Son acknowledged that while there were many differences between the United States and Vietnam, discussions with American delegations—particularly with the administration's representatives led by Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage—had revealed that both nations do have a common goal of resolving the MIA issue and that such resolution is, in fact, a humanitarian issue which can be resolved with or without normalization of relations.

Son, in referring to the Vietnamese work plan to complete the MIA accounting by the end of 1987, said that U.S. technical expertise aiding in joint crash-site excavations was welcome and valuable and that the Vietnamese will try to finish in 2 years. Son said the Vietnamese were able to do more work on the MIA issue because Vietnam is better equipped economically and more secure than in previous years. He said more citizens throughout Vietnam

are aware of this issue and will be mobilized to help. Increased U.S. cooperation would aid in the resolution of the MIA issue.

With respect to the delegation's concerns about alleged live sightings of American servicemen, Son commented that all American prisoners of war had been handed over and that Vietnam was not holding any live prisoners. Son did say that, if Americans were living in Vietnam, the Vietnamese Government had no knowledge of them nor were they under Vietnamese control.

Son referred to some Americans who allegedly "infiltrated illegally into Vietnam" after the war. The Vietnamese arrested them and turned them over to the United States. Son said there were "three or four, the last one in 1985." At least one reference was to an American sailing a private boat in Vietnamese waters. The Vietnamese generally hold such individuals briefly, fine them, and then release them. Son said the Vietnamese do not exclude the possibility that there may be some other illegal infiltrators from the United States. The delegation members asked Son if he was personally aware of any such infiltrators. Son replied that everyone who had been captured had been freed and affirmed that the Vietnamese Government is not holding any prisoners. The Deputy Foreign Minister repeated a phrase that "if any Americans are here, they are not under our control."

Senator DeConcini told Son that the legislative branch of the U.S. Government should work with Vietnam to assure the American people that all American prisoners had been released and that the United States is not sending any Americans into Vietnam. He asked Son if he believed a temporary U.S. presence—a technical team—in Hanoi would benefit the resolution of the MIA issue. Son replied that the current schedule of technical meetings between Vietnam and the U.S. Executive Departments (State and Defense) was sufficient. Son did say that any such presence in Hanoi would require a reciprocal presence by Vietnam in Washington, and that Vietnam did not believe such a need existed.

In reply to the delegation's offer to assist the Vietnamese in the recovery and accounting of the 300,000 Vietnamese MIA's through the use of the U.S. expertise centered in the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, Son commented that while Vietnam preferred to resolve the issue on its own, in principle, it welcomed the U.S. suggestion.

Members of the delegation asked Son if the Vietnamese would have any objection to an independent, international organization, such as the Red Cross, aiding in the investigation of live sightings. The delegation stressed that such an organization, with free access to the Vietnamese countryside, would have credibility in the eyes of many nations. The Deputy Foreign Minister rejected this proposal, saying that such an organization—or any outside group—would violate Vietnam's sovereignty and would interfere with Vietnam's internal affairs. Son said Vietnam welcomed assistance, but there would be no free access to any non-Vietnamese organization.

The delegation asked Son if it were possible that Americans could be alive in Vietnam without their Government's knowledge. Son said, "We cannot go everywhere. We cannot enter a church. There are jungles and caves. If there are any (Americans), they are not under our control." Delegation members asked Son if Vietnam had any remains in its possession. Son replied that the Vietnamese are always looking and that when remains are found they are turned over to the United States. Son held out the possibility that more remains would be turned over to the United States during the February 1986 technical talks. The delegation attempted to get a commitment from Son as to how many remains would be released. Son alluded to a number as great as 50 remains or "informations," which is the Vietnamese phrase for personal effects and/or reports of remains, but he would not be specific.

The delegation reinforced the need for a humanitarian resolution to the issue of MIA accounting, remains recovery, and live-sighting investigations if Vietnam and the United States were ever to become closer. Son replied that he appreciated the delegation's sentiment and that he believed the two sides were determined to resolve this issue in a humanitarian spirit.

The delegation moved from the MIA issue to discuss recent events in Cambodia. Son reiterated Vietnam's contention that the only reason Vietnam continued to maintain a military presence in Cambodia was to offset China's support of Pol Pot and Thailand's support of the Khmer Rouge.

The delegation asked Son if Vietnam would accept United Nation's arbitration toward a political settlement. Son replied that ASEAN and Vietnam had proposed solutions but no discussions had taken place. Son repeated Vietnam's intent to have its troops out of Cambodia by 1990 and the delegation asked if a political solution could step up that withdrawal timetable. Son indicated that Vietnam would withdraw sooner if there were a pol[illegible]ical settlement, but that the people of Cambodia should have the right to decide such a settlement and that Pol Pot must be eliminated. In response to a delegation question of free elections in Cambodia, Son said it was "our" intention to hold free elections; international observers would be allowed, but no international supervision would be permitted.

The delegation also asked Son to explain the Soviet Union's presence and activities in Camranh Bay in southern Vietnam, where the Soviets operate a portion of their naval fleet in what was a U.S. military base during the Vietnam war. Son replied that Vietnam had not allowed the Soviets to establish a base there. The delegation asked Son if U.S. Naval vessels would be permitted to visit Camranh; Son said no, since Vietnam and the United States do not have political relations. The delegation then asked if the British, who do have political relations with Vietnam, would be permitted to send their ships to Camranh Bay. Son acknowledged the British relationship, but said that the British were not friendly to Vietnam so their ships could not visit. Son said that the Soviets were only

visitors and, like India and other friendly nations, they could send visiting vessels.

8. The first U.S. Senate/House delegation to visit Vietnam commence discussions with Vietnamese officials on the POW/MIA issue (from left to right; Steve Johnson, John Hayes, Congressman Bob McEwen, Senator Dennis DeConcini, Senator Frank Murkowski, Anthony Principi, Congressman Michael Bilirakis, and Fred Brown).

On the evening of January 17, 1986, the Vietnamese hosted a small dinner at the Foreign Ministry for the American delegation. The dinner served as a valuable opportunity for delegation members and staff to speak directly and informally to the Vietnamese officials and their staff in attendance.

On the morning of January 18, 1986, prior to the delegation's meeting with Nguyen Co Thach, the British Ambassador to Vietnam hosted a breakfast for the delegation. Attending the breakfast were the Ambassadors from France, Italy, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The discussion covered a broad area of issues confronting relations with the Vietnamese. On the issue of Cambodia, the Ambassadors were of the opinion that the situation was improving and that the Vietnamese were anxious for a political settlement enabling them to withdraw their forces, which they would do even without such a settlement by 1990.

With respect to the MIA issue, they were also of the mind that Vietnam would cooperate with the United States in order to put that problem behind them. When the delegation raised the issue of live sightings, each of the Ambassadors replied that they have access to much of the country and that at no time had they or their staffs been aware of any Americans living either in captivity or of their own volition in Vietnam. They stressed the point of their access, and were very candid in their assessment that the Vietnamese were not holding Americans against their will. However,

they did indicate that it was highly probable that Americans were in Vietnam of their own volition.

Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach met with the delegation on January 18, 1986. The meeting paralleled, but went further than the previous day's discussion with Son. Thach repeated Deputy Foreign Minister Son's contention that there were no living MIA Americans. According to Thach, it would serve no purpose to hold any and "it would be stupid to do so." Thach said it was not in Vietnam's interest and would be against its humanitarian purposes. Vietnam had handed over the remains of missing Americans "free of charge." The issue was a humanitarian one and Vietnam would not accept any political conditions being attached to it. Thach was adamant on this point and indicated that Vietnam would cease cooperative efforts with the United States if they insisted on linking the MIA issue with normalization.

The delegation asked Thach to comment on the possibilities of live Americans in Laos, where many of the live-sighting reports originate. Thach replied that it was not in Laos' interest to hold American POW's either. He said that perhaps there were some Americans in Laos outside of the Lao Government's knowledge, but the Lao were not holding any. The delegation asked about Americans who died in captivity and whose remains were not returned at the end of the war. Thach replied that the Vietnamese knew who they all were, and that the National Liberation Front had told Hanoi about them. According to Thach, it is a clear situation. The Foreign Minister did not elaborate.

The delegation asked Thach for his comments on the live-sighting issue. Each member of the delegation stressed that the American people needed to know the truth about live sightings and asked Thach if Americans would be permitted to come to Vietnam to follow up on live-sighting reports. Thach replied if the United States believes Vietnam has no interest in having live prisoners, then they would cooperate. He said if the United States doubts Vietnam's good will, "we cannot work together." Thach indicated Vietnam's reluctance to allow American investigators in Vietnam. He said the Vietnamese people, given the hostility of the United States, will question why they are doing so. The delegation reminded Thach that Vietnam had approved joint excavations requiring American technical expertise and machinery. Thach responded by admitting that Vietnam does not have the machinery, and must rely on U.S. technical aid in crash-site excavations. He said that investigations of live sightings are different. Thach said the issue revolves around Vietnam's sovereignty and the internal affairs of Vietnam must be left to Vietnam. He did offer to accompany any member of the delegation into Vietnam for a personal investigation of live-sighting reports, but held out the offer only for members of this delegation.

The delegation then turned to the issue of Vietnam's "Reeducation Camps" and the inmates of those detention centers. The delegation members expressed their mutual concern that Vietnam, previously willing to release these inmates, was now backing off their

resolve. Thach responded by saying that, at the time the Vietnamese agreed to release the inmates, the United States would not give Vietnam a guarantee that the inmates, once living in the United States, would not, in some way generally undefined by Thach, be used against Vietnam. Thach said that without such a guarantee Vietnam would not agree to a release of inmates. Delegation members reiterated the U.S. position that under the American Constitution, we could not offer such a guarantee. Senator DeConcini observed that Foreign Minister Thach was placing unacceptable conditions on the inmates' release. Senator Murkowski told Thach that any released camp inmates would be subject to U.S. law. Thach replied that any agreement to release the inmates could not be based on American law. The Foreign Minister continued, saying that no release of the inmates could occur in the absence of normal relations due to America's "hostile policy" toward Vietnam. Delegation members replied that Vietnam was placing conditions on the release of the inmates; Thach rejoined that the issue was political, not humanitarian. The delegation attempted to make progress on the issue, but the Vietnamese intransigence precluded further positive discussion.

The balance of the meeting was devoted to two general areas: Vietnamese resolution of the Cambodian occupation; and U.S. cooperation in helping the Vietnamese recover and identify their war casualties. With respect to the latter issue, the delegation repeated their earlier offer to Vice Foreign Minister Son to offer the services of the JCRC and CIL staffs to aid in remains' identification. Thach noted the offer but declined, commenting that Vietnam was concentrating in resolving the American cases and that there were too many Vietnamese dead—many in mass graves—to accept the delegation's offer. Thach did, however, accept the delegation's offer to share U.S. studies on the effects of Agent Orange.

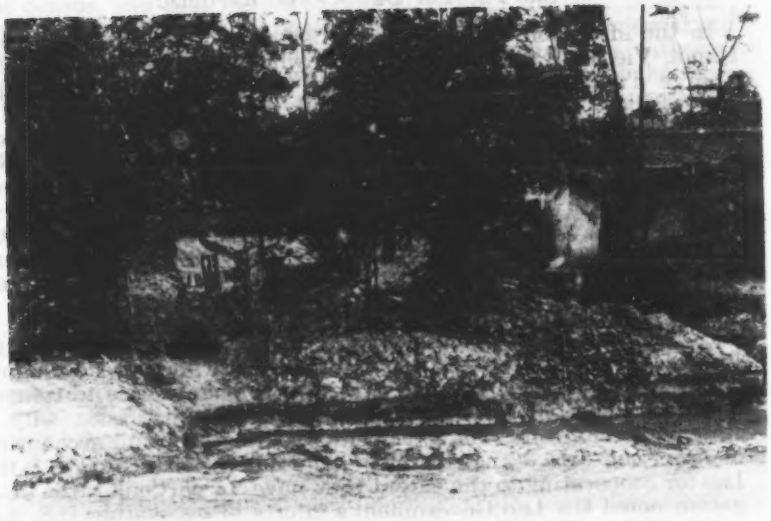
On Cambodia, Thach confirmed Son's comments of the day before, reiterating Vietnam's intention to withdraw its forces from Cambodia by 1990. He observed a political solution prior to 1990 would better that timetable, but the problem would be resolved, nonetheless, by 1990. Senator DeConcini asked Thach if the United Nations might assist in arriving at a political solution. Thach said that was not possible because the United Nations supported deposed Cambodian leader Pol Pot. Thach said while there existed the possibility of a political solution, ultimately the decision was up to the Khmer people. Thach then asked delegation members why the United States has not responded to the Cambodian Government's offers to cooperate with the United States on MIA cases related to Cambodia. The delegation responded that the United States could not deal with the Cambodians as long as Vietnam occupied Cambodia. Thach commented that he perceived that position as one which placed political conditions on the MIA issue and if that was the case, Vietnam could not work with the United States on the MIA issue either. Despite this apparent refutation of United States-Vietnamese cooperation, it was clear that Thach's statement was rhetorical, in defense of Vietnam's Cambodian occu-

pation and alliance with the Cambodians, and not to be taken literally.

At the conclusion of the meeting with Foreign Minister Thach, Senator Murkowski was notified of the arrival of two Vietnamese children from Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). The children's mother, a former Vietnamese citizen now living in the United States, had applied for their travel to the United States under the Orderly Departure Program [ODP] of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees [UNHCR]. The Vietnamese told Senator Murkowski that the children were being released to his custody for a flight to Bangkok. Senator Murkowski met with the children after the delegation's session with Thach and left the Foreign Ministry after a luncheon/reception hosted by the delegation for Foreign Minister Thach and Government officials.

9. During a break in the session, members of the Delegation pause for a photo with Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach on the steps of the Foreign Ministry in Hanoi (From left to right; Congressman Bob McEwen, Congressman Michael Bilirakis, Senator Dennis DeConcini, Foreign Minister Thach, Senator Frank Murkowski and Mr. Nguyen Cao)

Prior to departing Hanoi, the delegation made a brief inspection tour of a B–52 crash site on the outskirts of Hanoi. This site had recently been the subject of a joint United States-Vietnam excavation effort and was, at the time of the delegation's visit, in the process of being filled in. Although the excavation did not result in the recovery of any remains, the delegation did observe parts of the aircraft wreckage. Another alleged B–52 crash site closer to Hanoi was visited by delegation staff but was not seen by members of the delegation.



10. The Delegation visited the site of a B-52 crash in the outskirts of Hanoi. This particular site was recently excavated by a joint U.S./Vietnamese team. Although no remains were recovered the Delegation viewed part of the B-52 wreckage.

11. A wing section of a B-52 is visible in a pond located in Hanoi. Members of the staff visited the site of the wreckage.

LAO PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

In the afternoon of January 18, 1986, the delegation flew from Hanoi, Vietnam, to Vientiane, Laos, where they were greeted by Charge d'Affairs Frederick O. Shoup and other members of the staff of the U.S. Embassy. That evening the Embassy staff hosted a very pleasant reception and dinner at the Embassy. As with Hanoi, only on a much smaller population scale, Vientiane appeared to be a city in great need of economic relief. There was still sufficient evidence of the earlier days of French influence to recall a city of great beauty. Yet the current condition of the buildings and deteriorating sewage system makes it clear that the Lao Government does not have the resources to maintain, much less rehabilitate Vientiane.

On the morning of January 19, 1986, the delegation met with Lao Vice Foreign Minister Soubanh Srithirath in a broad-ranging discussion of POW/MIA matters, with a brief reference to refugee questions. The delegation members began the discussion with a statement reiterating the U.S. position calling for a full accounting of American MIA's and expressing the delegation's thanks to the Lao for cooperating to the extent they have. In particular, the delegation noted the Lao Government's efforts in excavating U.S. aircraft crash sites and offered U.S. assistance in such excavations and remains' recoveries. The delegation mentioned their interest in resolving MIA discrepancy cases and live-sighting reports and asked the Lao to make available any information on these subjects. Members of the delegation noted recent press reports of alleged incursions into Laos by non-U.S. sanctioned individuals and the possible capture and/or death of an American citizen or citizens. The delegation stressed that the United States respects the sovereignty of Laos and does not condone cross-border forays or adventurism by any group or individuals.

Delegation members expressed their hope that the United States and Laos could work together to resolve the issue of live sightings and MIA accountability as well as crash-site excavations. Delegation members cited the conversations between the delegation and Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach in which the delegation and Thach agreed that increased cooperative efforts were possible, including Thach's invitation to delegation members to personally investigate live-sighting reports. Senator Murkowski also offered the Lao access to the resources of the JCRC and CIL for the purpose of helping the Lao identify their war dead and for documenting the effects of Agent Orange.

Vice Foreign Minister Soubanh was cordial in his replies to the delegation's several points and offers but firm in his resistance to allowing United States, international, or otherwise neutral observers into Laos to further investigate MIA or live-sighting cases. Soubanh noted that the Lao people were still cautious in their acceptance of the United States, having considered the United States the enemy for many years. He said it was difficult for the people to change their way of thinking, but that Laos would seek cooperation from all countries. Soubanh said that 1985 was a year of a nation-

wide census, and that results of that survey did not yield evidence of any American living in Laos. Soubanh expressed the view that even the possibility that Americans were living in Laos without Lao Government knowledge was very remote. He said that the terrain of Laos was too inhospitable to support such long-term survival.

Delegation members expressed concern with the Lao refusal to allow live-sighting investigations by outside organizations, commenting that if the Lao were certain there were no living Americans in Laos they should have no objections to granting such access. The delegation said such refusal could only strain Laos' credibility with the American people. Soubanh replied that what the American people thought was up to them, but that the Lao hoped only that America would think of improving United States/Lao relations.

Soubanh told the delegation that their Government's first priority on the MIA issue is joint United States/Lao crash-site excavations and that orders had also gone out to the Lao provinces to pass back any available information on crash sites.

The Vice Foreign Minister then questioned the delegation about the alleged Lao resistance activities of Vang Pao and commented that he had heard that Vang Pao had been mentioned in U.S. Senate hearings. Both Senators Murkowski and DeConcini replied that Vang Pao had not been mentioned in Senate hearings within the past 2 years. They confirmed to Soubanh that the United States does not support subversive efforts against the Lao and that there were no appropriations to support such activities.

Following the meeting with Vice Foreign Minister Soubanh, the delegation called on Lao Foreign Minister Phoun Sipaseut to emphasize the U.S. interest in working with the Lao in a cooperative effort to resolve the MIA issue and to comment on the improvement in United States-Lao relations overall. After the delegation's opening comments, Phoun said he believed the delegation's visit would lead to a step forward in United States-Lao relations. He expressed his appreciation for the "great efforts" of the Americans to that end and thanked the delegation for helping lift the aid ban and expressed his confidence that the United States and Laos would continue their cooperative efforts in the future.

The delegation reiterated points made during their meeting with the Vice Foreign Minister and stressed to Phoun that the Congress is the voice of the American people, people who are compassionate and whose nature is to help others in need of assistance. Phoun noted that the delegation's discussions with Soubanh would result in detailed reports and, that despite the differences between the two sides, further development of good United States-Lao relations was possible.

The balance of the meeting took up Southeast Asian regional issues, with Phoun commenting on the recent contacts between Vietnam and Indonesia; Laos' relationship with Thailand; outside military aid supporting opposition forces in Cambodia; and differ-

ences of opinion within ASEAN. Phoun did cite an improvement in Lao-Thai relations, but qualified that with comments about Thai connections to China and Thai support of the Lao resistance elements. Phoun did say that U.S. ties with the Indochinese States should be maintained—that change would not benefit either side and that the United States has a role in Indochina which prefers dialog to confrontation. Following this meeting, the delegation was hosted by the Lao Foreign Ministry officials and staff to a pleasant luncheon at the delegation's hotel. In midafternoon the delegation departed Vientiane for Bangkok.

THAILAND

The delegation returned to Bangkok, Thailand, on the afternoon of January 19, 1986, for further meetings prior to departing for the United States. Shortly after arriving in Bangkok, members of the delegation briefed Ambassador Brown and members of the Embassy staff on their consultations with Vietnamese and Lao officials. The delegation expressed the view that the trip was successful and provided the members with a deeper insight into the POW/MIA issue and other matters affecting U.S. relationships with Vietnam and Laos.

On the morning of January 20, 1986, the American Chamber of Commerce hosted a breakfast for the delegation. A broad array of international trade and political issues affecting American business interests were discussed with the members. At the request of the chamber, the delegation provided an overview of the Vietnam and Laos visit.

Following the breakfast, the delegation held its first press conference on their mission. The members had the opportunity to express their views on the meetings with Vietnamese and Lao officials and their perception of the POW/MIA issue.

12. Members of the Delegation hold their first press conference in Bangkok, Thailand following their visits to Vietnam and Laos. U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, William A. Brown, sits to the left of the Delegation members.

The delegation departed for the United States on the morning of January 21, 1986. The two Vietnamese children were aboard the aircraft for the journey to Alaska and a reunion with their mother. It was to be a fitting end to a very meaningful journey.

13. Xuan Thi Nguyen is reunited with her two children Nguyen Vu Chinh and Tran Thanh Quynh at Elmendorf Air Force base in Alaska. Senator Frank Murkowski responds to questions regarding their departure from Vietnam and journey to Alaska.

COMMENT

The mission of the joint Senate-House delegation, as outlined at the opening of this report, was, essentially, to express to the Governments of Vietnam and Laos that the American people, represented by the members of the delegation and their colleagues in Washington, do seek a full and complete accounting of America's missing-in-action soldiers. Through ancillary meetings with U.S. officials, leaders of America's Southeast Asian allies, staffs of the Department of Defense's various Pacific military commands, the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, and the Central Identification Laboratory, the delegation was well-prepared to speak with the Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and Laos. The delegation is grateful for all the efforts by those who helped prepare for this mission.

It would be inappropriate to say that as a result of this very brief, but nonetheless, very detailed trip that the delegation is able to reach a clear conclusion on current and future chances for full MIA accountability. Political scenarios in play across Southeast Asia make for a very complex panoply upon which is overlayed this one issue, which, while of singular importance to Americans, does not appear to be of great concern to either of the two principal nations involved.

That is not to say that the leaders of Vietnam or Laos dismiss the emphasis with which Americans view the MIA issue. It is also clear that despite the mutual policy intoned by all involved parties—that is, that the resolution of the MIA issue is humanitarian and must not be linked to political or economic normalization—Vietnamese and Lao leaders are pragmatists who are aware that resolution of this issue must be accepted before the American people will consider U.S. efforts toward improved economic and/or political ties with either of these nations.

The Vietnamese seemed more willing than the Lao to enhance current efforts and expand future activities toward MIA accountability and remains' returns, although it is difficult to judge the effect Vietnamese directions may have on the Lao. As of the date of this report, the Vietnamese Government had turned over an additional 21 sets of remains, though these have not been positively identified as American. This is an encouraging sign, and one that was foreshadowed during this delegation's meetings with the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry officials.

Upon the delegation's return to the United States, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee took up the issue of American POW/MIA live sightings. Based on the discussions with Thai, Lao, Vietnamese, United States, and allied governments officials during the trip, the committee members have been able to place this issue in a new and valuable perspective. While it may not be possible to reach a conclusion that will be sufficient to resolve the disposition of all U.S. MIA's or account for all live-sighting reports, the Vietnamese and Lao Governments are clearly on notice as a result of this mission that the American people are watching with great interest the efforts and commitments of these two countries.

Vietnam has pledged to resolve the MIA issue within the next 2 years. Laos, while not as forthcoming with a commitment, did express to the members of the delegation a willingness to cooperate, and has, in fact, been helpful with crash-site excavations. It is the committee's hope—reflecting the hope of the families of America's missing-in-action servicemen—that these signs of progress have been enhanced by our journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report would not be complete without first thanking the many staff whose tireless efforts made our long, arduous mission to Southeast Asia successful. From the initial planning stages, through the many scheduling changes to our aircraft safely touching down at Andrews Air Force Base on the evening of January 22, 1986, I owe a special debt of gratitude to those who made it work.

I want to especially commend, Lt. Col. Donald J. Fix, Lt. Col. Grayson Winterling, Sgt. Cloyd Riddle, and Sgt. David Scarberry of the U.S. Army, Office of Legislative Liaison, for making this a most productive and enjoyable trip. Colonel Fix and his associates were always available to members and staff from the beginning to the end to ensure that everything ran smoothly. A special thanks to Lt. Col. Douglas M. Cummings, M.D. (Doc), the delegation physician. Dr. Cummings anticipated our every need and his care and personal concern for our welfare were crucial to the success of the trip. Thanks for a job well done.

A note of thanks to Susan Sherwood of the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Senate. Ms. Sherwood provided invaluable assistance to the delegation and I am especially pleased that she was part of our team.

The delegation was fortunate to have a top flight crew, led by Lt. Col. Doug Howder. The many long hours spent airborne were made enjoyable and comfortable by a fine group of professional U.S. Air Force personnel.

I also want to thank Stephen Johnson, Country Officer for Vietnam and Laos, U.S. Department of State, whose advice and counsel were invaluable to the success of this trip. His knowledge of Vietnam and Laos aided the delegation immeasurably and his briefing papers prepared us well for our meetings with Vietnamese and Lao officials.

Finally, my deepest thanks goes out to the committee staff for the enormous contributions they made to this mission. The success of this important mission is a reflection of their professionalism, energy, and dedication to the U.S. Senate and the members they serve.

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI,
Chairman.

CHRONOLOGY OF U.S./SRV POW/MIA ACTIVITIES

May 1981–June 1986

May 1981	Technical meeting held in Hanoi between United States and Vietnamese officials.
July 1981	SRV turned over several sets of remains.
August 1981	United States and SRV Ambassadors met for discussions in Bangkok.
November 1981	United States proposed policy level POW/MIA delegation to Vietnam.
February 1982	A mission led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Armitage visited Hanoi to discuss the POW/MIA issue.
June 1982	Initial contact by the League of Families re: League trip to SEA.
July 1982	Vietnam agreed to League delegation's trip.
August 1982	A team from the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons [VNOSMP] visited the Joint Casualty Resolution Center [JCRC] and the Central Identification Laboratory [CIL] in Hawaii.
	Frequent League/SRV contact to finalize logistics for trip.
September 1982	4-member League delegation met in Hanoi with officials of VNOSMP and Vice Foreign Minister Giang.
	SRV Foreign Minister Thach announced agreement to a longstanding U.S. request for regular meetings in Hanoi (4 a year) between SRV and U.S. POW/MIA technical experts.
October 1982	SRV turned over the remains of 4 individuals and identification data on 3 others.
December 1982	First quarterly technical meeting held with the SRV in Hanoi.
January 1983	President's address to the League concerning POW/MIA.

March 1983 ..... Second quarterly technical meeting held with the SRV in Hanoi. SRV announced its intention to turn over data on 12 missing servicemen.

June 1983 ..... Third quarterly technical meeting held with the SRV in Hanoi. SRV turned over the remains of 9 individuals and identification data on 3 others.

July 1983 ..... SRV informed United States that because of Secretary Shultz' statements in Bangkok about Vietnam and the POW/MIA issue, it is not appropriate to set a date for the next meeting.

August 1983 ..... SRV Foreign Ministry published text of memorandum which blamed U.S. hostile attitude for lack of progress on the POW/MIA issue, but stated that SRV will continue to urge its people to search for MIA's.

September 1983.... United States proposed a new date for the next technical meeting and told the SRV that the United States is willing to publicly recognize significant progress in accounting.

League executive director met with SRV Foreign Minister Thach who clarified no linkage between POW/MIA and other issues. High level delegation proposed.

October 1983 ..... League executive director met with Foreign Minister Thach to follow up previous meeting and provide requested POW/MIA cases.

White House representative Richard Childress and League executive director met with Foreign Minister Thach to propose specifics of high level U.S. delegation to Hanoi. Agreement in principle reached.

November 1983..... United States proposed a December technical meeting date to SRV, noting that United States would continue to publicly recognize Vietnamese contributions to resolving this humanitarian issue. SRV later replied that the time is not appropriate to resume the technical talks.

SRV agreed to high level U.S. delegation after first of the year, 1984.

League and USG reacted to SRV's turndown of technical meeting date.

December 1983 ..... League executive director met with Vietnamese to propose date for high level U.S. delegation to Hanoi.

In an interview with Reuters in Hanoi, SRV Foreign Minister Thach said, "We recently got some [POW/MIA] information and I will hand over this information to the United States."

SRV mission called League to provide data on 3 American remains to be turned over to VVA.

January 1984 ..... United States informed SRV that information about or return of remains should be through government-to-government channels.

Congressional intervention encouraged SRV to use government-to-government channels.

Dates for high level U.S. delegation proposed by SRV during meeting with League executive director in New York.

United States agreed to proposed dates for mid-February.

Indochina Foreign Ministers communique, released in Vientiane, contained language on the POW/MIA issue and indicated willingness to cooperate with United States.

February 1984 ..... United States proposed joint announcement of high level U.S. delegation and finalized arrangements during League executive director's meeting with SRV in New York.

Agreement reached between United States and SRV for joint announcement of high level delegation and specific details.

Delegation led by Assistant Secretary of Defense Armitage, including White House representative, League executive director and State Department officials met with senior SRV officials in Hanoi who agreed that cooperation on the POW/MIA issue would be accelerated. Several specific steps were discussed. The SRV agreed to turn over 5 sets of remains and indicated willingness to turn over 3 remains originally promised to VVA, if VVA would agree. It was agreed to resume the quarterly technical meetings.

March 1984 ..... SRV agreed to a quarterly technical meeting in mid-April.

April 1984..... SRV postponed resumption of quarterly technical meetings originally scheduled for mid-April for "technical reasons."

League executive director met with SRV Ambassador in New York to receive official explanation for delay of technical meetings and SRV offer to reschedule in mid-May.

May 1984 ..... SRV Prime Minister stated in press interview that SRV is planning to turn over 8 remains to the United States. (Note: 5 sets from Armitage mission plus 3 originally promised to VVA.) USG still awaited rescheduling of next technical meeting at which further information and perhaps remains could be provided.

Senior SRV diplomat indicated that next quarterly meeting with United States may be delayed until after Australian POW/MIA delegation visited the SRV in May.

SRV mission contacted League representative to explain SRV dissatisfaction with official U.S. statements, level of PRC attacks on Vietnam—reasons for continued delay in scheduling of technical meetings.

League executive director contacted SRV mission to respond to points raised in earlier discussion, pointing out public perception if SRV continues to delay turn over of remains and technical meetings.

June 1984 ..... Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman held press conference to call on the SRV to schedule technical meeting, return remains and not link POW/MIA to other issues.

SRV Ambassador requested meeting with League executive director in New York to further clarify points raised during April meeting, SRV rationale for postponement of technical meetings, and repatriation of 8 remains. League executive director outlined USG, congressional, public, veterans groups, and family member reaction to policy of postponement.

July 1984 ..... SRV stated intention to turn over 8 remains on July 17, 1984, but declined to schedule technical meeting.

SRV requested meeting with League executive director to further outline rationale for turning over remains but not scheduling technical meetings.

SRV agreed to turn over 8 remains previously pledged.

SRV agreed to a U.S. proposal to schedule the technical meetings and offered mid-August as an appropriate date.

8 remains turned over by the SRV to U.S. officials in Hanoi.

SRV responded positively to U.S. request to schedule technical meeting and proposed mid-August.

President Reagan spoke at the White House ceremony for National POW/MIA Recognition Day, July 20, 1984, during which he commended the Vietnamese for meeting 2 of the 3 pledges made in February 1984, and called on them to fulfill the other commitment made.

August 1984 ..... Technical meetings were held in Hanoi between officials of the U.S. Joint Casualty Resolution Center [JCRC] and Central Identification Laboratory [CIL] and Vietnam Office of Seeking Missing Persons [VNOSMP].

October 1984 ..... Representative of the White House National Security Council and the League's executive director met with Vietnamese Foreign Minister to discuss means to accelerate progress on the POW/MIA issue.

U.S. officials met with Vietnamese counterparts in Hanoi for a technical meeting on the POW/MIA issue, held earlier than the quarterly schedule, viewed as a positive sign from the Vietnamese.

December 1984 ..... Congressional delegations visited Indochina to raise several issues, including the POW/MIA problem. The Vietnamese again affirmed that the POW/MIA issue was humanitarian, to be pursued separate from other matters.

February 1985 ..... U.S. officials met with Vietnamese counterparts in Hanoi for a technical meeting on the POW/MIA issue. The Vietnamese provided new information on several American servicemen and permitted the U.S. team to visit a U.S. aircraft crash site.

March 1985 ..... Representative of the White House National Security Council and the League's executive director met in Hanoi with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach to pursue accelerated cooperation to resolve the issue. Foreign Minister Thach agreed to increase the number of technical level meetings from 4 to at least 6 per year and to turn over several American remains before the end of March 1985. The delegation also visited a previously unvisited B–52 crash site.

6 remains of American servicemen were repatriated to U.S. officials during ceremonies in Hanoi. 2 of the 6 had previously been listed as died in captivity in southern Vietnam. This signaled the initial step in fulfilling Vietnamese Foreign Minister Thach's February 1984 pledge to focus efforts on these cases.

April 1985..... A technical level meeting between officials of both countries was held in Hanoi during which the Vietnamese agreed in principle to permit U.S. representatives to conduct the first official survey of an American aircraft incident site.

July 1985 ..... Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar announced Vietnam's agreement to again enter into high level discussions with U.S. officials to resolve the issue "within 2 years." U.S. Government spokesmen publicly welcomed the commitment and indicated their intention to quickly pursue Vietnam's pledge.

During July 3–6 technical level meetings in Hanoi, Vietnam announced their intention to turn over to the United States the remains of 26 Americans and identification material or information on 6 others. The announcement was welcomed by U.S. officials as evidence of accelerated cooperation.

August 1985 ..... Vietnam turned over to U.S. officials remains reported to be those of 26 Americans during August 14 ceremonies in Hanoi. If positively identified as Americans, this constitutes the largest turnover of American remains since the end of active U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Representative of the White House National Security Council, League executive director, State Department official Lyall Breckon, and JCRC representative LTC Paul Mather met with Vietnamese Acting Foreign Minister Vo Dong Giang and Deputy Foreign Minister Hoang Bich Son for the most substantive and constructive meetings yet held on the issue. Both sides proposed implementation plans to resolve the issue within the 2-year timeframe committed to by Vietnam in early July. No preconditions were stated and both sides will seek to integrate the workplans which have many common elements. Although the Vietnamese again denied that Americans are held in captivity, they stated willingness to continue investigating sighting reports which come to their attention.

September 1985 ... Lao experts travel to Hawaii for consultations with the Joint Casualty Resolution Center and the Central Identification Laboratory in which Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kelly participates.

Technical meeting in Hanoi. Vietnamese agree in principle to joint excavations.

Mr. Childress leads delegation including Mrs. Griffiths and Mr. Breckon which meets in New York with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Giang.

Series of meetings between U.S. and Lao officials, including Under Secretary of State Armacost and LPDR Foreign Minister Phoun.

November 1985 .... Technical meeting in Hanoi.

November/
December 1985..... First joint excavation of a crash site in Vietnam.

December 1985..... Vietnam turns over 8 remains. 6 have thus far been identified as those of American servicemen.

Assistant Secretary of State Wolfowitz and Mr. Childress visit Vientiane and discuss POW/MIA's.

January 1986..... Mr. Armitage leads a delegation, including Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. Childress, and Mrs. Griffiths to meetings in Hanoi with Foreign Minister Thach.

The first joint United States Senate-House of Representatives delegation to visit Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos since the end of the Vietnam war. Members of the delegation include: Senator Frank H. Murkowski (R-Alaska); Sen-

	ator Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona); Representative Bob McEwen (R-Ohio); and Representative Michael Bilirakis (R-Florida).
February 1986	A House of Representatives POW/MIA Task Force visits Hanoi and discusses POW/MIA issue.
	Second joint excavation in Laos takes place followed by the survey of another crash site.
	Technical meeting in Hanoi.
April 1986	Vietnam turns over 21 remains.
	Vietnam postpones technical meeting due to take place in April.
	Senator Frank H. Murkowski and Vietnamese Ambassador to the United Nations meet to discuss suspension of technical talks and related issues.
June 1986	Technical meeting in Hanoi.
	Mr. Childress, Mrs. Griffiths, Mr. Breckon, and Colonel Hill meet in Hanoi with Foreign Minister Thach and Deputy Minister Scn, and in Vientiane, accompanied by Charge d'Affaires Theresa Tull, with Deputy Foreign Minister Soulivong Phasitthideth.

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